

Given a simile, the reader identifies its literal meaning.

UNIT 9
Lesson 1
Critical Reading

TECHNICAL TALK

A good writer uses things the reader knows. The writer wants you to understand exactly what he or she wants to say. Sometimes figures of speech are used this way. You may have heard Superman's introduction. Remember? "Faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive..." We all know how fast bullets move and if you have ever stood by a railroad track when a train rushed by, you have felt the power it has. This unit deals with some figures of speech.

TRY IT

A simile is a figure of speech. It helps you understand something by comparing it to something else. Below are several similes you may have heard. See if you can put the sentences back together. Write the letter in the line for each number.

FAMOUS "LIKES"

- | | |
|--|--|
| ___ 1. That shook when he laughed ... | (a) like an old coat, all tattered and torn. |
| ___ 2. Up above the world so high ... | (b) like a red, red rose. |
| ___ 3. It was as black ... | (c) as midnight. |
| ___ 4. The dawn comes up ... | (d) like a bowl full of jelly. |
| ___ 5. My love is ... | (e) like a diamond in the sky. |
| ___ 6. Once I was happy, but now I'm
forlorn, ... | (f) like thunder out across the bay. |

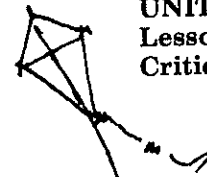


REVIEW

A simile compares one thing to another. Almost all similes have the words "like" or "as" in them. Each of the similes in the last lesson comes from a poem or song or an old saying. Did you get them all? Check your answers with the answer key.

Look for similes, they help us understand the writer's ideas. Here are some more. match these.

UNIT 9 Lesson 2 Critical Reading



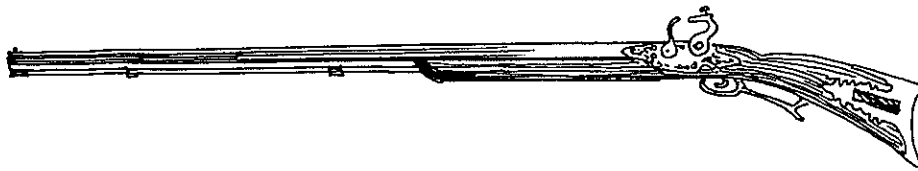
See if you can

SAYINGS

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| ___ 1. swift | (a) than greased lightning |
| ___ 2. green | (b) as a hornet |
| ___ 3. high | (c) as a snake's belly |
| ___ 4. quick | (d) as a kite |
| ___ 5. smooth | (e) as an eagle |
| ___ 6. sweet | (f) as honey |
| ___ 7. faster | (g) as a newborn babe |
| ___ 8. mad | (h) as a whistle |
| ___ 9. innocent | (i) as grass |
| ___ 10. dirty | (j) as silk |
| ___ 11. low | (k) as a pig |
| ___ 12. happy | (l) as a lark |
| ___ 13. pretty | (m) as a picture |
| ___ 14. straight | (n) as a wink |
| ___ 15. clean | (o) as an arrow |

Some of these are very old sayings. People use them in talking, but you will not see them very much in writing. Why? They are so old that they have been used too much. Writers try to think up new comparisons to make similes. You should think up new ones, too. These are worn out like old socks.





Read the paragraphs below. Match the sayings about guns to what you think the meaning is for each one.

LOCK, STOCK, AND BARREL

Figures of speech, or “sayings” as some people call them, come from everyday things. During the pioneer days in America guns were as important as cars are today. Most families had guns for hunting and protection. Sometimes men even carried guns to church during troubled times. It was natural then for people to compare things to their guns. It helped them to better explain their ideas.

Guns then were complicated to use. They had to be loaded carefully. In very early times the gun was fired when flint hit against steel. The sparks this caused dropped into a little pan full of gunpowder. The powder burned down through a little hole into the gun barrel. There it set off the powder that drove the bullet. If the powder did not burn through the hole, the gun did not fire. When that happened people called it a “flash in the pan.” Sometimes they used those same words to describe a person who succeeded brilliantly once but never again.

Try matching these other figures of speech about guns with their meanings. Use a dictionary if you need to. Look up the underlined words.

- ___ 1. He stood straight as a ramrod.
- ___ 2. The whole project misfired.
- ___ 3. Mrs. Brody lost her belongings lock, stock, and barrel.

- (a) He stood very relaxed and on one leg.
- (b) The project blew up.
- (c) He stood with his back perfectly straight.
- (d) Mrs. Brody lost a door lock, some cows, and a barrel of something.
- (e) Nothing happened in the project when it was supposed to.
- (f) Mrs. Brody lost everything she owned.

HOW DID YOU DO?

